

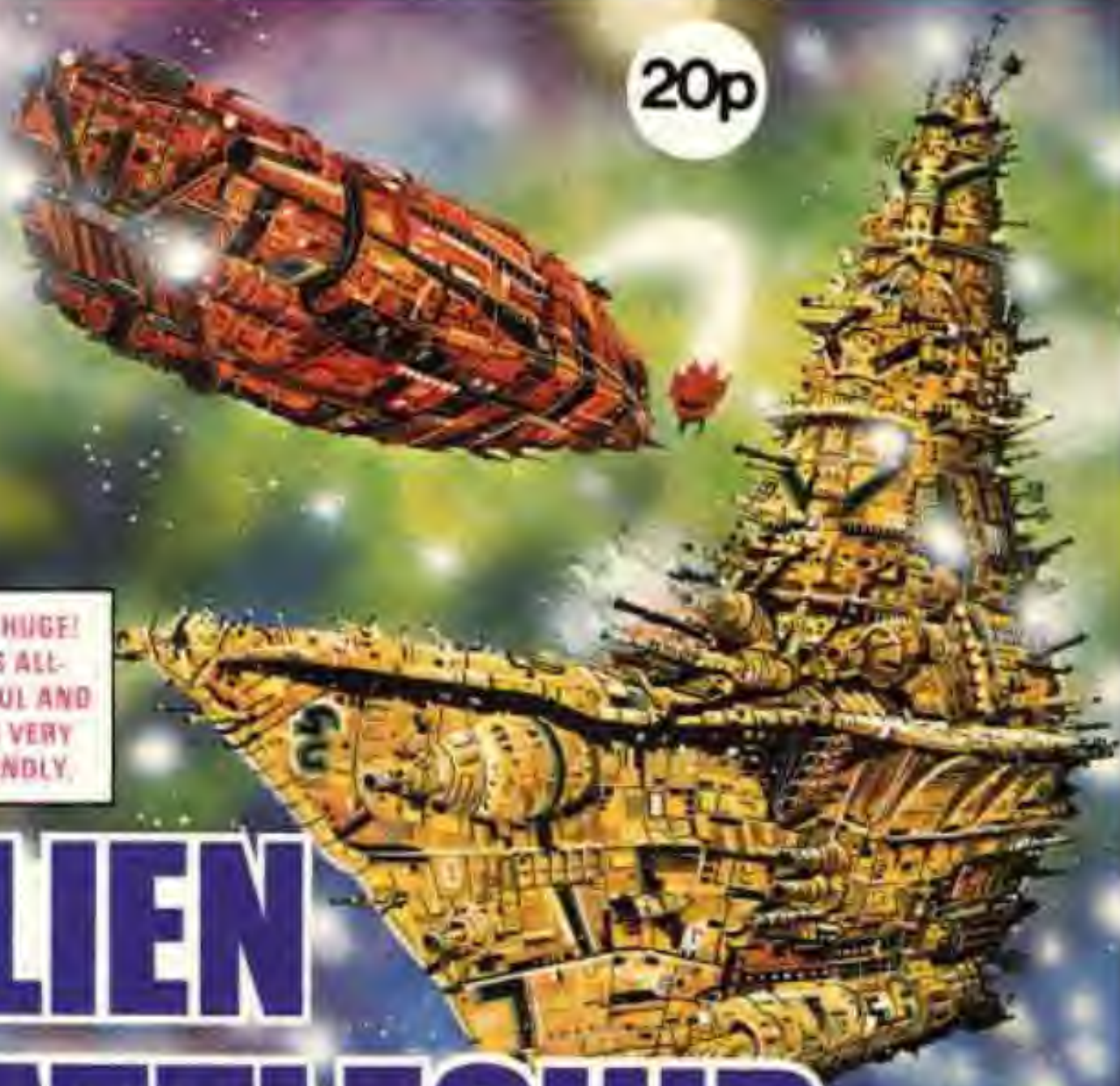
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 126

20p

IT WAS HUGE!
IT WAS ALL-
POWERFUL AND
IT WAS VERY
UNFRIENDLY.

ALIEN BATTLESHIP



STARBLAZER

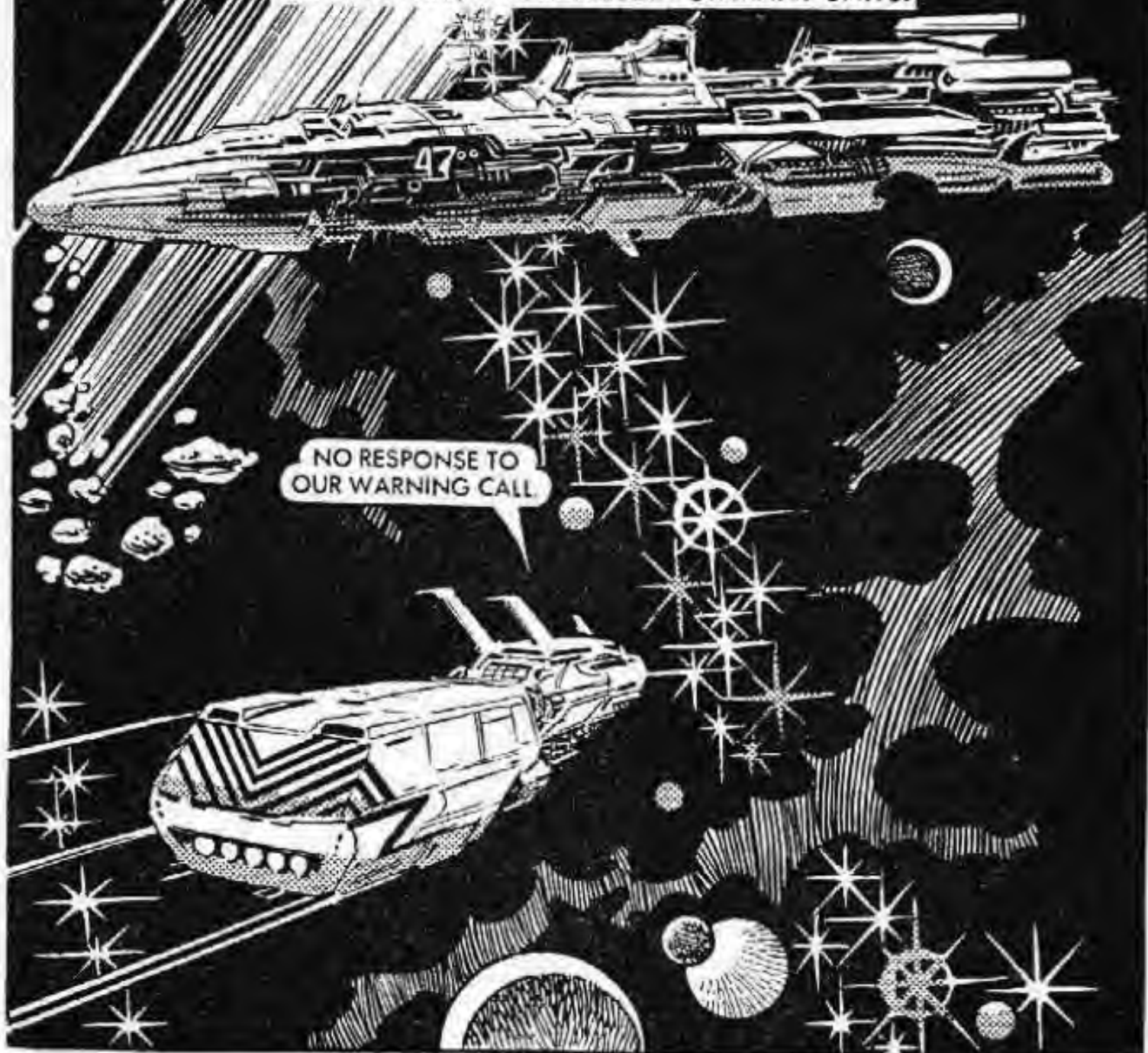


FOR MANY CENTURIES EARTH PUSHED OUT HER FRONTIERS TO THE VERY EDGE OF KNOWN SPACE. HUGE WARPWAYS WERE CONSTRUCTED TO ASSIST IN THE SAFE AND SPEEDY JOURNEYS TO OTHER SYSTEMS. RECOVERY VESSELS PATROLLED THE WARPWAYS KEEPING THEM CLEAR OF DEBRIS, SLOW-MOVING VEHICLES AND OTHERS THAT DIDN'T ADHERE TO THE RULES. IT WAS WITH SOME SURPRISE THAT THE CREW OF TI ENCOUNTERED A STRANGE CRAFT, SO STRANGE THAT IT DIDN'T EVEN RESPOND.

ALIEN BATTLESHIP

T1, CREWED BY TWO MEN, HAD BEEN MONITORING
THE STRANGE, SILENT VESSEL FOR MANY UNITS.

NO RESPONSE TO
OUR WARNING CALL





SKIRTING AN APPROACHING STORM, T1 DREW ALONGSIDE THE ALIEN SHIP.



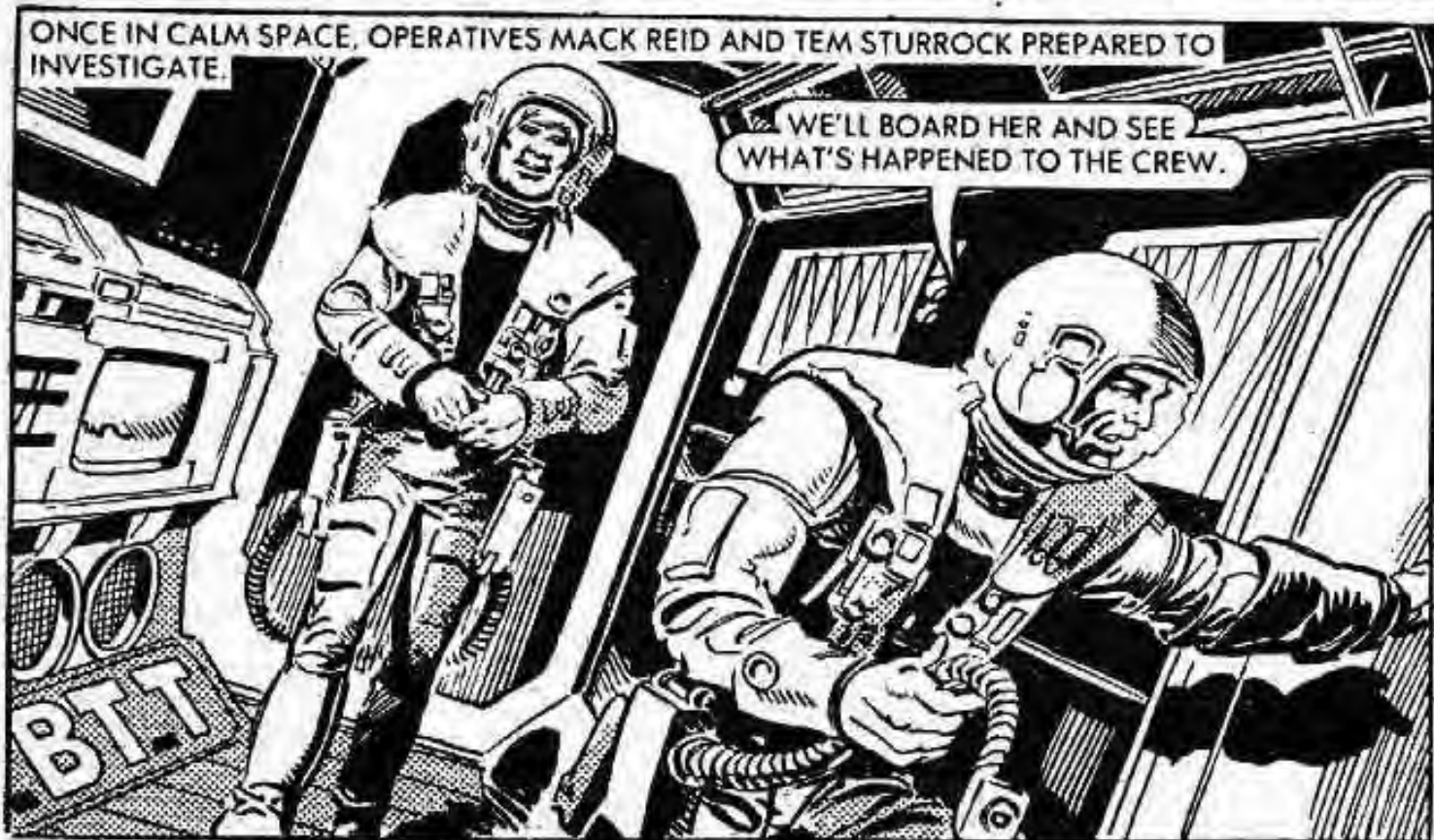
ELECTROMAGNETIC RAMS EXTENDED FROM THE SALVAGE SHIP, SENDING BOLTS OF ENERGY AGAINST THE ALIEN SHIP'S HULL.

NO FORCEFIELD
... CLAMP ON.

THE T1 SUCCEEDED IN NUDGING THE LARGER SHIP THREE DEGREES OFF COURSE, AND INTO A SAFE AREA.

ONCE IN CALM SPACE, OPERATIVES MACK REID AND TEM STURROCK PREPARED TO INVESTIGATE.

WE'LL BOARD HER AND SEE
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE CREW.



THE TWO DRIFTED ACROSS TO THE ALIEN VESSEL.



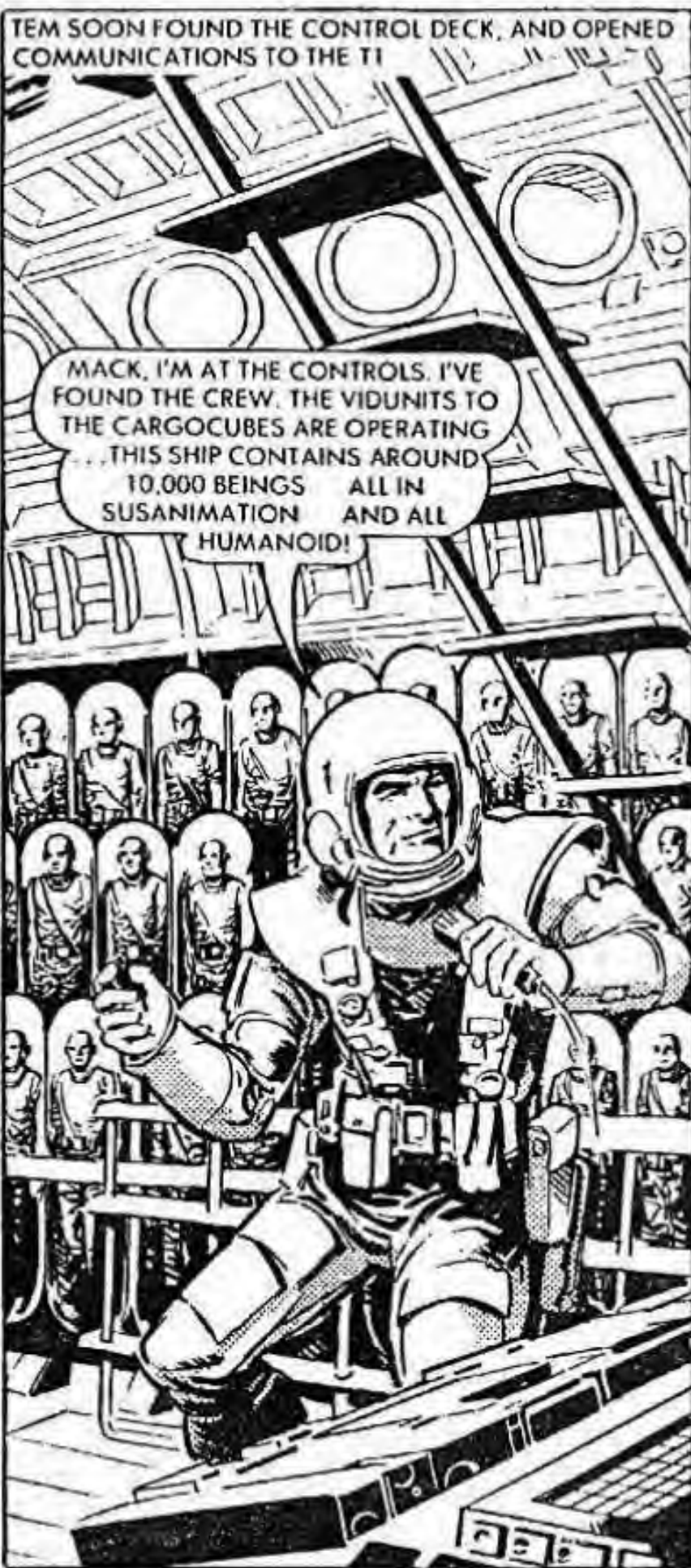
THEY BYPASSED THE AIRLOCK SECURITY DEVICE —



IT'S OPEN!

OH... OH... WARNING
— YES, COMPUTER.

AUTOMONITOR DETECTS THREE
ALIEN VESSELS AT 042, CLOSING.
FAST... PRESENT POSSIBLE
HAZARD.



ON BOARD T1 —

TEM, THE MONITOR HAS NOW
PRODUCED ANOTHER PROBLEM.
ALTER COURSE, THE SHIP IS
HEADING STRAIGHT FOR A
RADIATION BELT AROUND THE STAR
ALPHA DD1 9QJ.

TEM TRIED TO ALTER THE CRAFT'S COURSE —

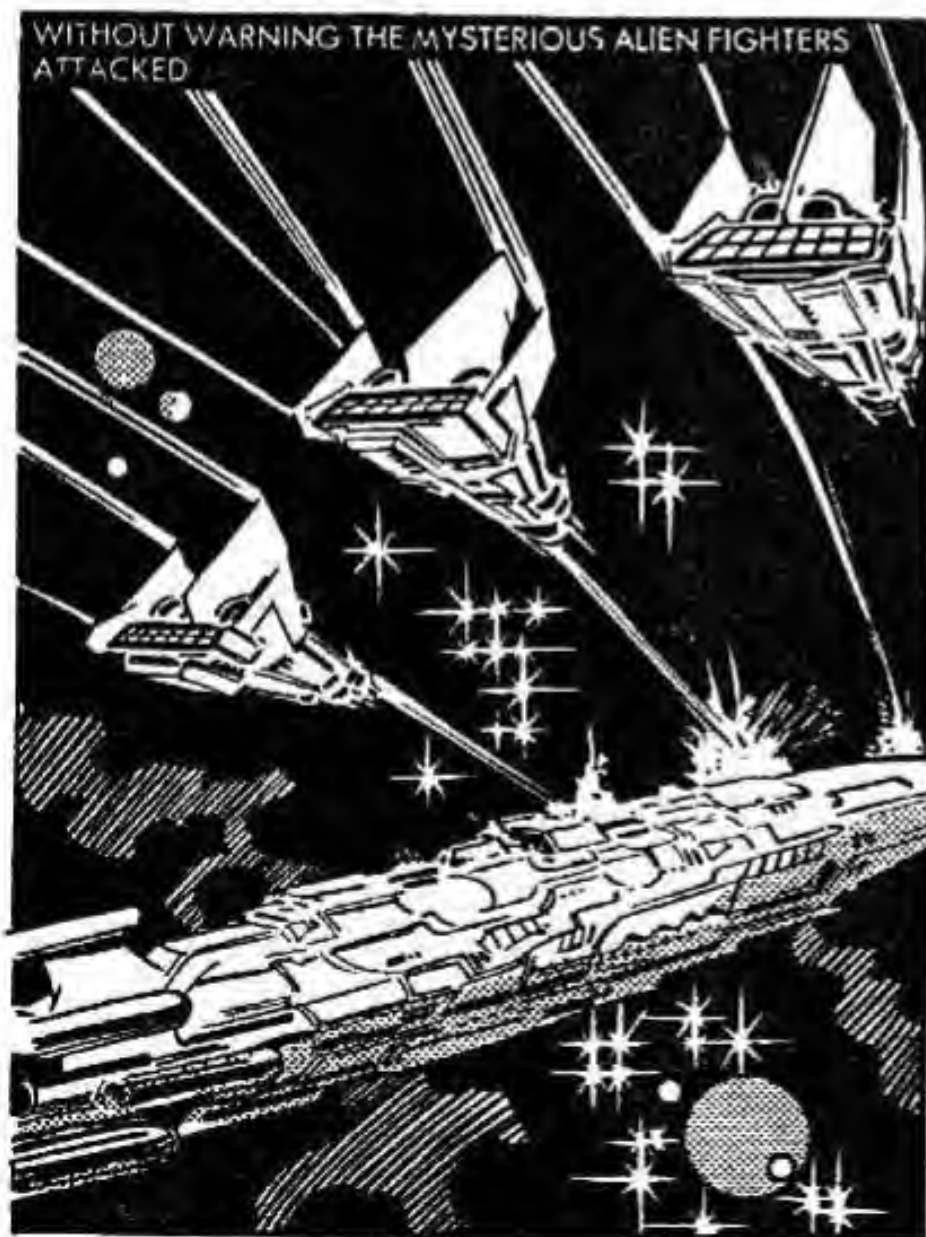
IT'S NO GOOD, THE CONTROLS ARE
TOO COMPLEX. I'LL NEED A COMPUTER
LINK IN ORDER TO CHANGE
COURSE.

NO GOOD... BY THE TIME THAT'S SET UP,
THE CRAFT WILL BE SOAKED WITH RADIATION.





TEM, NOW THE THREE CRAFT HAVE
ARRIVED. WARSHIPS, CLOSING IN ON YOU
FAST. THEY'RE NOT ANSWERING MY
IDENTITY CALL.



WITHOUT WARNING THE MYSTERIOUS ALIEN FIGHTERS
ATTACKED



THE MISSILE STRIKES INITIATED
AN AUTO RESPONSE FROM THE
SLUMBERING CRAFT —

WHAT'S HAPPENING? ARE
THEY SHOOTING AT US?



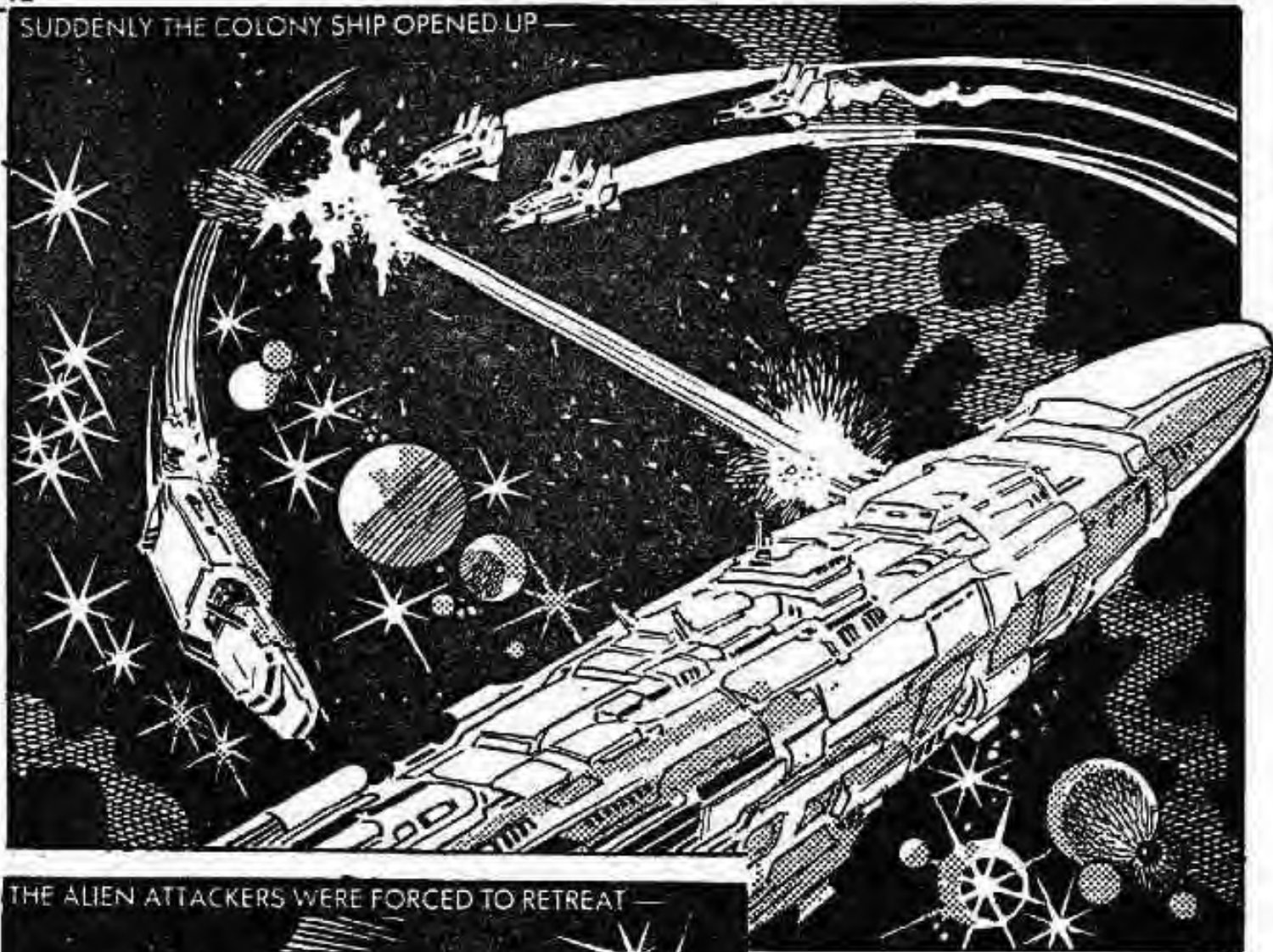
MACK DISCHARGED THE SALVAGE SHIP'S CUTTING LASER INTO THE ENEMY FORMATION —



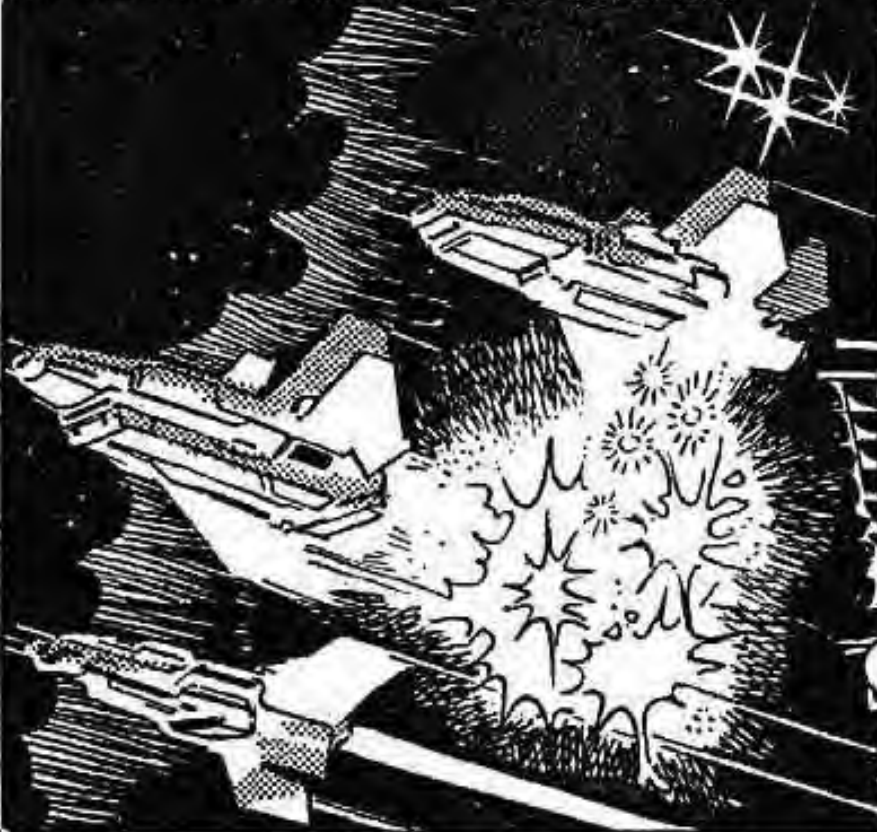
TI WAS HIT, AS IT RETREATED UNDER FIRE —



SUDDENLY THE COLONY SHIP OPENED UP —



THE ALIEN ATTACKERS WERE FORCED TO RETREAT —



VIDLINK WAS IMMEDIATELY
RESTORED —



PILOT — AS YOU ARE OBVIOUSLY
DAMAGED YOU WILL TOUCH
DOWN ON PLANET 7 IN THIS
SYSTEM — WE SHALL FOLLOW
YOU IN.

WITHIN A PARSEC BOTH CRAFT HAD LANDED



MACK WAS MET BY TEM AND THE PERSON HE HAD SEEN ON THE SCREEN.

I AM HIRLIX, AND YOUR HELP WAS WELCOME. I THINK YOU ARE ENTITLED TO AN EXPLANATION. WHEN I AWOKE FROM SUSPSLEEP I WAS PUZZLED TO FIND THIS MAN, TEM, ON BOARD. HOWEVER, ONCE MY LOGIC PROCESSES RETURNED TO NORMAL, EVERYTHING BECAME OBVIOUS.



MY CRAFT, SANTANA, IS PROGRAMMED TO RESPOND TO ANY ATTEMPT AT FORCED ENTRY BY ALIENS. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO OPEN ANY AIRLOCK FROM THE OUTSIDE, THEREFORE YOU MUST HAVE FORCED ENTRY. THE FACT THAT YOU SURVIVED A FORCED ENTRY, MEANT THAT YOU WERE NOT AN ALIEN. IF YOU WEREN'T AN ALIEN YOU HAD TO BE OF OUR RACE...





THE WAR HAS DRAGGED ON FOR YEARS, AND NOW THE GORGOI ARE TOO NUMEROUS. MOST PLANETS HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED. THE SURVIVORS ATTEMPTED, BY USING COLONY SHIPS, TO RETURN TO THE SANCTUARY OF EARTH. WE BELIEVE THE GORGOI HAVE DESTROYED ALL BUT OUR OWN UNIT.



LOOK!



GORGOI FROM THEIR INFERNAL ALIEN BATTLESHIP. THEY HAVE DOGGED US EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. STILL, WE WOULD PREFER TO FIGHT THEM ON THE GROUND — OUR MAIN ARMAMENT IS STILL INOPERATIVE, DUE TO AN INABILITY TO RECHARGE IN DEEP SPACE.



AS THE COLONISTS PREPARED A GROUND BASE, MACK SCANNED THE AREA WITH AN INFRARED COMPDETECTOR.

THAT RUIN'S AT THE CENTRE OF A WEB OF TUNNELS BENEATH THE MOUND. THEY RADIATE FOR MILES AROUND. SOME HAVE CAVED IN, BUT SEVERAL ARE CLEAR. THERE'S NO OTHER SIGN OF HABITATION.



HIRLIX SUMMONED ROBOT WORK VEHICLES —

WE MUST INVESTIGATE...
COME!



A SOIL-VAPORISER ROBOT OPENED UP A LONG-BLOCKED ENTRANCE.

OUR SCANS SHOW NO SIGNS OF LIFE. I WONDER WHAT THIS CONSTRUCTION WAS, AND WHERE THE BUILDERS ARE?



LONG HOURS PASSED AS THE ROBOT CLEARED THE TUNNEL. FROM THE SANTANA, A CAREFUL WATCH WAS KEPT AS THE GORGOI MOTHERSHIP, IN DEEP SPACE, SENT DOWN LOAD AFTER LOAD OF TROOPS.



EVENTUALLY AN OPENING WAS EXCAVATED—

THE TUNNELS ARE SAFE... HOWEVER
WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE THEY GO.



BACK AT T1, MACK HAD PICKED UP ADVANCING GORGOI FORCES—

ALERT! GORGOI
GROUND FORCES...



ALERTED, THE COMBINED TERRAN FORCES WAITED—



THE FIRST WAVE OF GORGOI ATTACKED.



BUT THE EARTH FORCE HELD THEM AT BAY—



THE GORGOI PERSHING SS.20 AUTOFIRE CRAFT LOCKED ONTO THEIR TARGETS—



THE COLONISTS HAD NO ANSWER
TO THE LETHAL AUTOCRAFT—



WITH THE RING OF DEFENCE BREACHED, THE GORGOI BEGAN TO POUR THROUGH. THE
COLONY SHIP, POWER SOURCES DRAINED, WAS USELESS.



CLOSE UP THE COLONY SHIP... WE'LL
RETREAT INTO THE TUNNELS.

MACK SEALED THE SANTANA BY COMPUTER LINK, AND BEFORE HE LEFT T1—

ONE FINAL ACTION
BEFORE I SEAL UP T1.



MACK LAUNCHED LASER FLARES WHICH WERE USED IN SALVAGE WORK TO TEMPORARILY STOP MACHINERY SUCH AS SUB-ATMOSPHERIC IONGRAV ENGINES.



SUCH AS THOSE THAT
POWERED THE GORGOI
AUTOFIRE CRAFT.



ONE CRAFT PLUNGED INTO THE
ADVANCING GORGOI—

THE SECOND CRAFT CRASHED NEAR THE SALVAGE SHIP,
BUT REMAINED INTACT.—



THAT ONE IS
STILL RUNNING.

GOOD... IT'LL OVERLOAD AND SHUT
DOWN. BEFORE IT RE-ACTIVATES WE
CAN FIT A MANUAL OVER-RIDE.

ABRUPTLY THE COMPUTER ON THE LASERCRAFT SHUT DOWN TO INVESTIGATE THE MALFUNCTION.

THAT'S IT—RUN LIKE HADES BEFORE IT OPENS UP AGAIN.



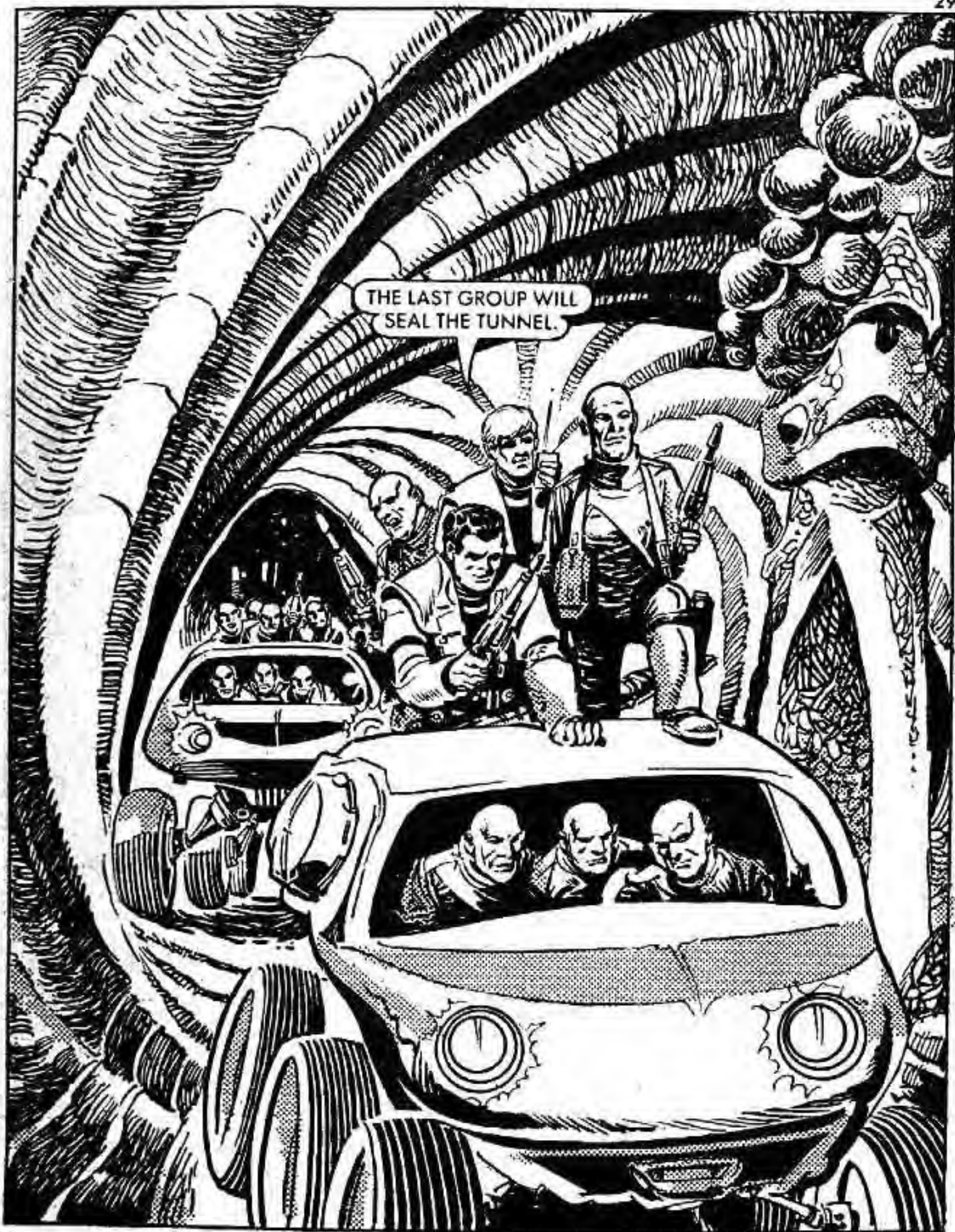
THEY SPURTED THROUGH GORGOI FIRE TO THE COVER OF THE CRAFT—







THE LAST GROUP WILL
SEAL THE TUNNEL.





BUT THE TUNNEL LED TO THE SURFACE.



THE SURVIVORS EMERGED IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ANCIENT STONE CIRCLE.



TEM AND A COLONIST SCOUTED THE AREA—

WE'VE TRAVELLED ABOUT A DOZEN
SEKS UNDERGROUND — THERE'S THE
GORGOI MOTHER CRAFT.



EACH AT THE STONE CIRCLE ROBOTS BEGAN TO PUT AN IDEA INTO PRACTICE—



TWO OF THE FORCE WERE
DESPATCHED TO RIG A CANNON IN
SUCH A POSITION THAT THE
INEVITABLE GORGOI ATTACK WOULD
BE CAUGHT IN A CROSSFIRE AND
UNABLE TO RETREAT.



WILL IT WORK?

YES... IF WE CAN PERSUADE
THE GORGOI TO ATTACK US.

IF THE GORGOI ATTACK US, THAT DEVICE WILL
ABSORB AND MAGNIFY THE DISCHARGED ION
ENERGY OF THEIR BLASTERS...



... THROUGH THIS SATELLITE AND
EVENTUALLY TO A RECHARGE UNIT ON THE
MOTHER SHIP. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS
ATTACK THE GORGOI, LAUNCH THIS, AND
HOPE FOR THE BEST. YOU SEE, THEIR
WEAPONS HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF
ENERGY.



FIRE!



CHAOS REIGNED IN THE GORGOI CAMP—



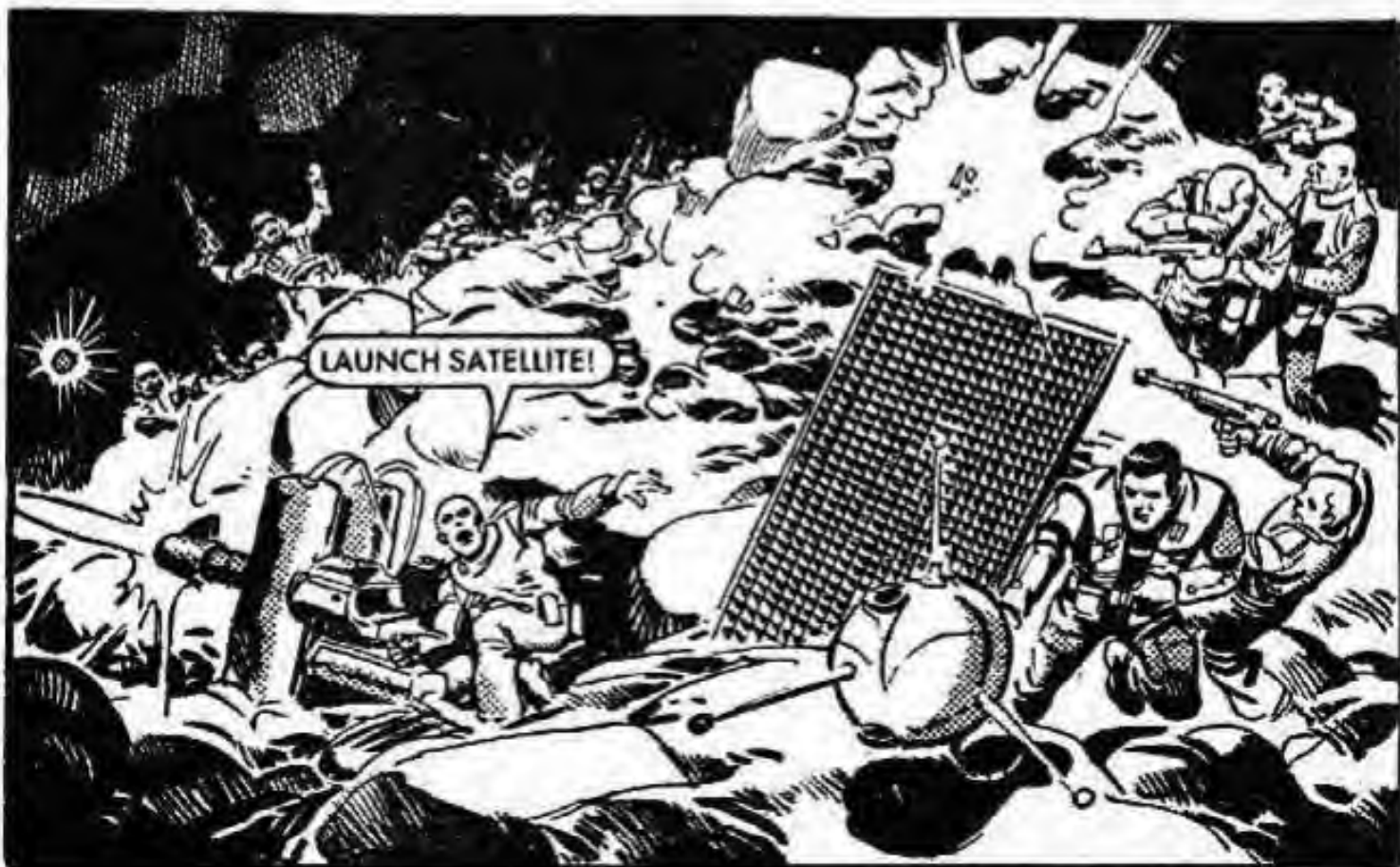
THE GORGOI SCALED THE CLIFF RAPIDLY TO REACH THEIR ENEMIES.



WE COULD PICK THEM OFF BEFORE THEY
GOT HALF WAY UP.

YES, BUT WE NEED THEM TO FIRE AT US
WITH THEIR BEAM WEAPONS.





THE PLAN WAS WELL UNDER WAY ...



... WITH THE SMALL SATELLITE CHANNELLING
ALL THE IONISED ENERGY BACK TOWARDS
SANTANA.

ACTIVATED BY A CODE, THE COLONY
SHIP OPENED A RECHARGING EYE,
AND SYSTEMS BEGAN TO REPLACE
VITAL ENERGY.



THE ENERGY IS FLOODING IN, BUT UNTIL THE BANKS COME OUT OF THE CRITICAL AREA WE CAN'T USE THEM.

WE START BACK THROUGH THE TUNNELS.



THE JOURNEY BACK THROUGH THE TUNNELS WAS RAPID, AND WITH THEM DESTROYED TO STOP PURSUIT, A WATCH WAS KEPT ON THE GORGOI FROM THE COLONY SHIP.

THE GORGOI ARE CLOSING IN —
THEY OBVIOUSLY INTEND TO
ATTACK US BEFORE SANTANA IS
FULLY RECHARGED.



A GORGOI ASSAULT TEAM ATTEMPTED TO OUTFLANK THE HUMANS BY ATTACKING THROUGH THE SWAMP.

THE GORGOI ARE ADVANCING THROUGH THE SWAMP. WE CAN TAKE THEM THERE.

MAC K LED A FORCE INTO THE SWAMP TO INTERCEPT THE GORGOI.



CONTACT WAS SOON MADE.

ATTACK ROBOT R2... UNDERWATER!
TAKE OUT THE LEADRAFT.



THEY'VE GOT
AIR SUPPORT!

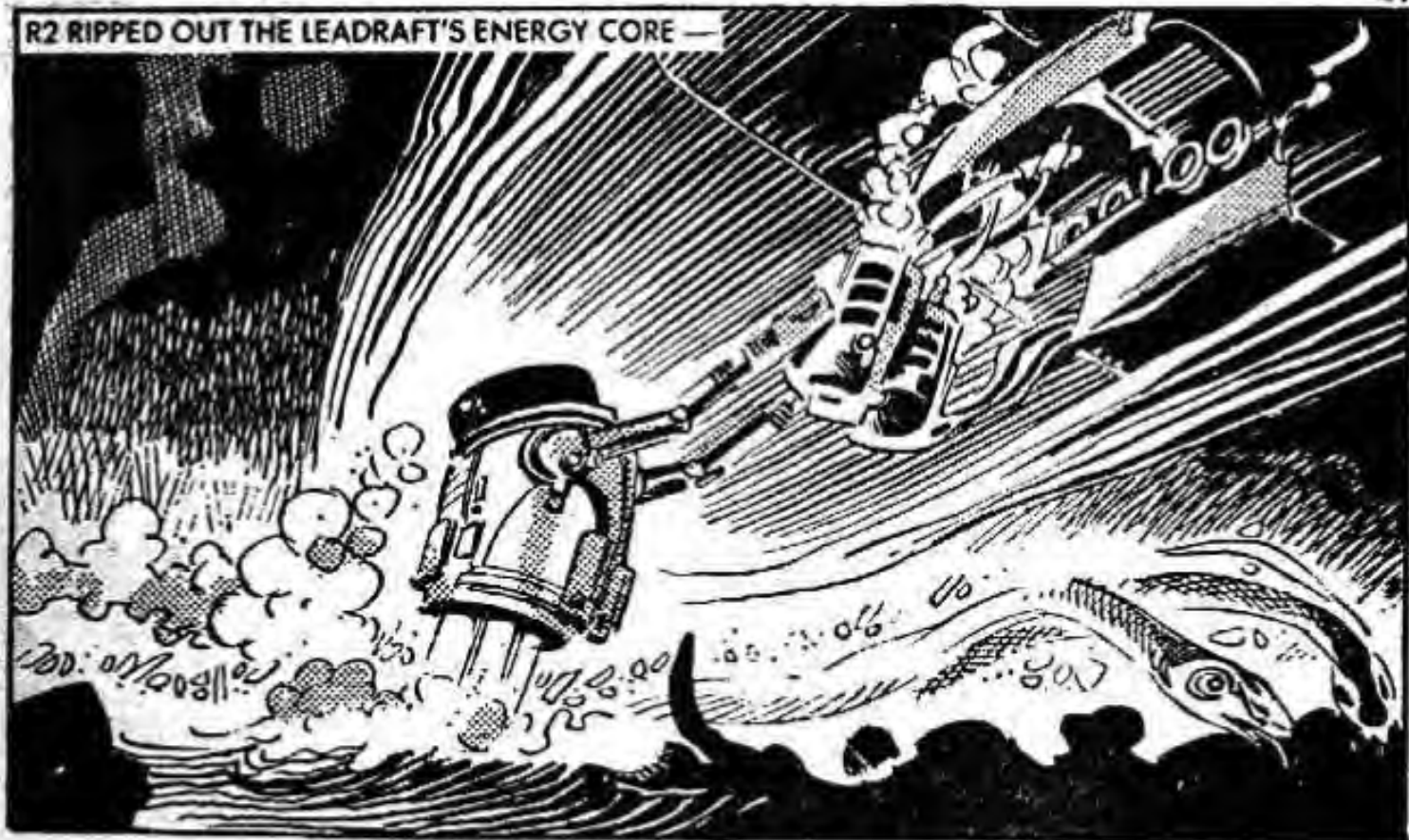


WE'LL HAVE TO GET THE RAFTS FIRST,
THEN FINISH THAT AIR SUPPORT.

R2 WAS ON TARGET



R2 RIPPED OUT THE LEADRAFT'S ENERGY CORE —



R3 ... DIVERT THE OTHER TWO ... WE'LL
BOARD THE DAMAGED ONE.



THEY CLAMBERED ABOARD A DAMAGED RAFT —



IN FRONT OF THE REMAINING RAFTS, R3 DISCHARGED A COCKTAIL OF CHEMICALS —



THE COMPOUND CAUSED THE RIVER TO FREEZE ALMOST INSTANTLY —



BUT TOO LATE —



MACK WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH THE GUNSHIP WHEN THE AIR SUPPORT ARRIVED.





BUT THE GUNSHIP INADVERTANTLY RUINED THE AMBUSH, BY CRASHING INTO, AND BREAKING, THE ICE.



MACK! WE'LL HAVE
TO GO AFTER IT.



THE REMAINING GORGOI RAFT EMERGED INTO CLEAR WATERS —

THERE'S OUR OBJECTIVE —
AND NO SIGN OF ANY DEFENDERS.



MACK TO COLONY SHIP . . . PREPARE
FOR ATTACK BY GORGOI SQUAD.

NOT POSSIBLE . . . WE ARE
STILL TAKING IN ENERGY!



SEND TEM AND THREE OTHERS TO
T1 FOR THE SUBMERSIBLE SUITS, THEN . . .



TEAM FOLLOWED MACK'S PLAN TO ENTER THE LAKE AHEAD OF THE RAFT.



SLOW DOWN! PREPARE
TO ATTACK THE SANTANA.



AS THE RAFT SLOWED, IT PRESENTED A PERFECT TARGET.



SAVE YOURSELVES!



SOME OF THE GORGOI MANAGED TO PUT ON HELMETS, AND FOUGHT WITH THE COLONISTS UNDERWATER



BUT EVENTUALLY —



WE'VE WIPED OUT THE GORGOI ASSAULT TEAM, MACK.

BACK TO THE SHIPS BEFORE WE ARE CAUGHT.

SANTANA AND THE T1 BLASTED INTO ORBIT —

OUR BANKS CANNOT COPE WITH SPACEFLIGHT AND FIGHTING. WE HAVE NO HOPE OF COMING OUT OF THIS ALIVE UNLESS WE CAN GET THE GORGOI BATTLESHIP IN ORBIT.



THAT IS THE ONLY CHANCE WE HAVE OF DESTROYING THE GORGOI BATTLESHIP, WHICH IS THE BASE FOR ALL THESE FIGHTERS THAT KEEP ON OUR TRACK.

T1'S ONLY NEEDLEPROBE ENTRANCE CRAFT WAS PREPARED FOR A RISKY ATTEMPT AT CAPTURING THE GORGOI FIGHTER —

WE'LL ONLY GET ONE CHANCE, TEM, SO WHEN I GIVE THE WORD — LAUNCH THIS.



T1 POWERED ITS WAY INTO THE ATMOSPHERE.



THE GORGOI FIGHTER QUICKLY LATCHED ON TO THE T1 —

ENEMY CRAFT LEAVING ATMOSPHERE —
IT WILL BE EASILY PICKED OFF.



THE GORGOI FIGHTER SLID IN BEHIND THE BLIND AND ALMOST DEFENCELESS T1

TARGET CANNON ... FIRE
ON COMMAND ...





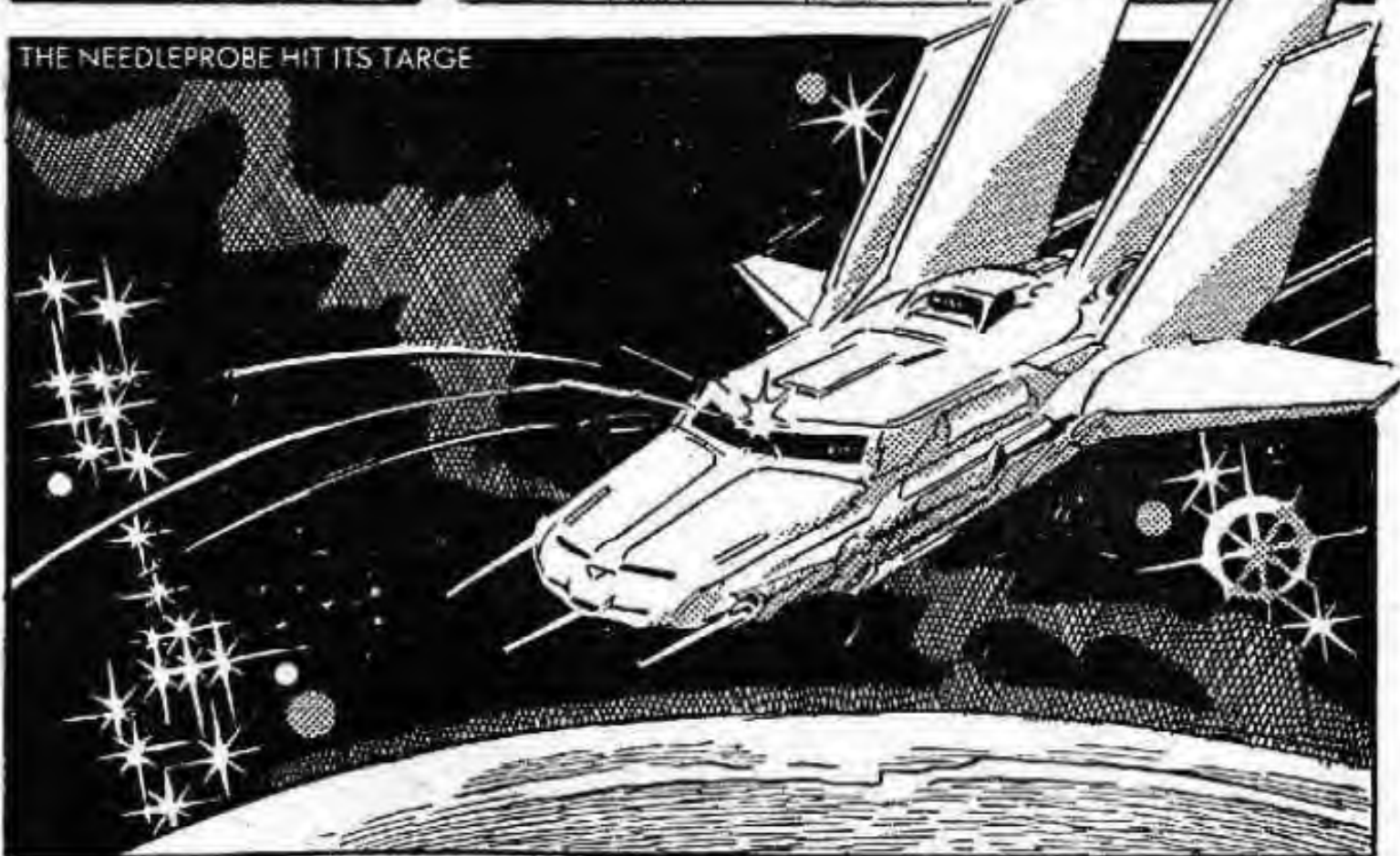
FIRE!

BUT MACK GAVE THE ORDER TO FIRE
A FRACTION BEFORE THE GOROI.



SFLAP!

THE NEEDLEPROBE HIT ITS TARGET



THE HIGH-INTENSITY SONAR RESONATOR OVERPOWERED THE CREW IN SECONDS —



MACK AND HIS SQUAD DRIFTED OVER —

STOP THE AUTO SOS.



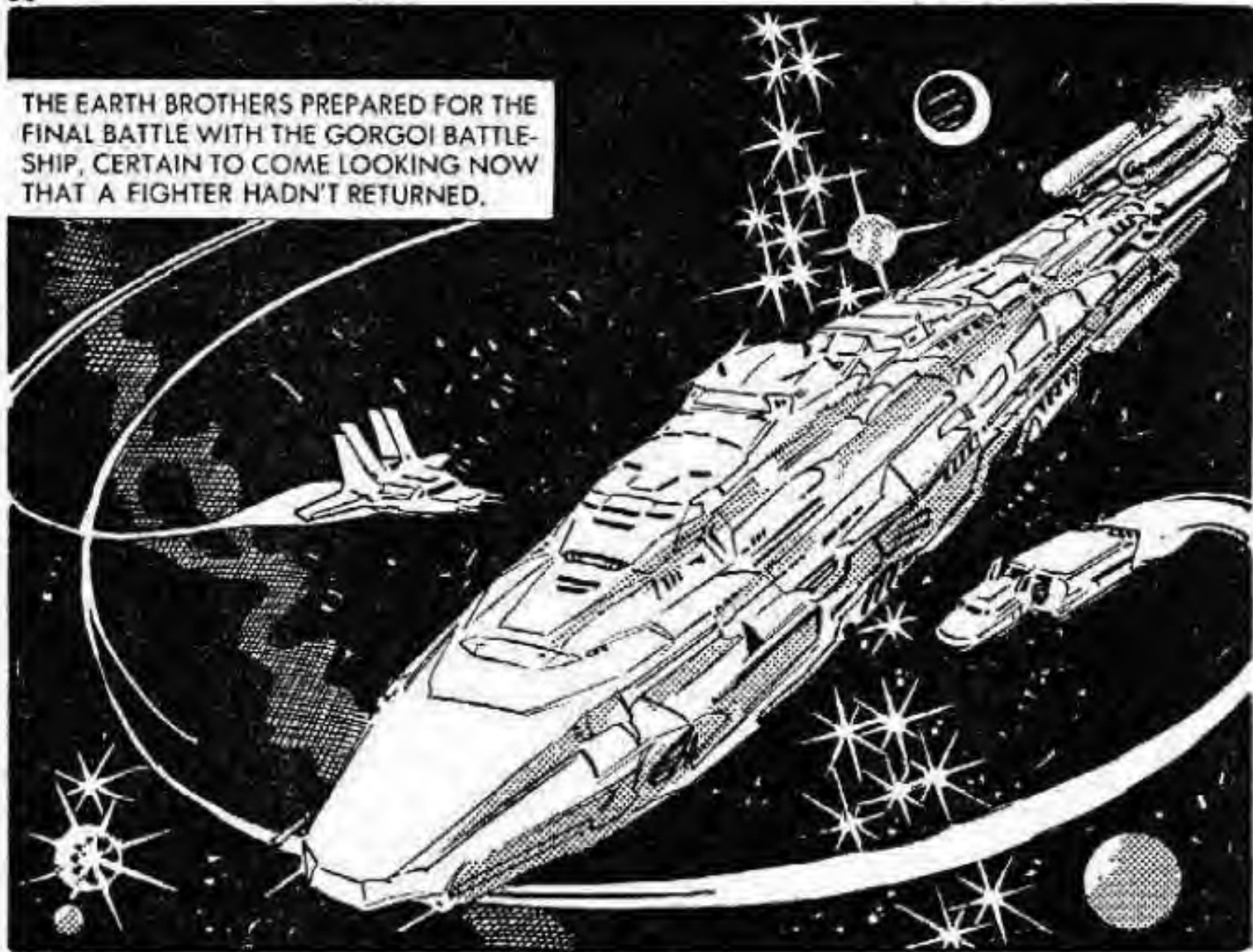
IT TOOK ONLY A FEW BRIEF MINUTES TO TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE GORGOI COMPUTER AND RECODE INSTRUCTIONS INTO STANDARD TERRAN PHRASEOLOGY.



COLONIST MIKAL SCHENKER
TO SANTANA... MIKAL
SCHENKER GROUP TO
SANTANA... YOU ARE
CLEARED FOR BLAST OFF.



THE EARTH BROTHERS PREPARED FOR THE FINAL BATTLE WITH THE GORGOI BATTLESHIP, CERTAIN TO COME LOOKING NOW THAT A FIGHTER HADN'T RETURNED.



THE GORGOI BATTLESHIP IS IN A TEMPORAL WARP, SO WE HAVE NO CHANCE OF FINDING IT.

SO IT MUST FIND US — WE MUST BE READY.



SANTANA'S GOT A WARP TRACKER — WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PICK UP SPACIAL DISTURBANCES AT AN EARLY STAGE.

TEMPORAL WARPS WERE LITERALLY HOLES IN SPACE WHERE TIME STOOD STILL.

EVERY SPACIAL WAS INVESTIGATED, UNTIL —

SECTOR 5. SPACIAL DISTURBANCE ON LEVEL 42. THAT MEANS SOMETHING OF 2 MILLION TONS WARPING THROUGH, AND ACCORDING TO THE IDENTICHARTS, THAT'S WHAT A GORGOI BATTLESHIP DISPLACES.

THAT MUST BE IT! FOR A FEW SECONDS AFTER WARP, IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FIRE CANNON, BUT ITS SHIELDS WILL BE UP...

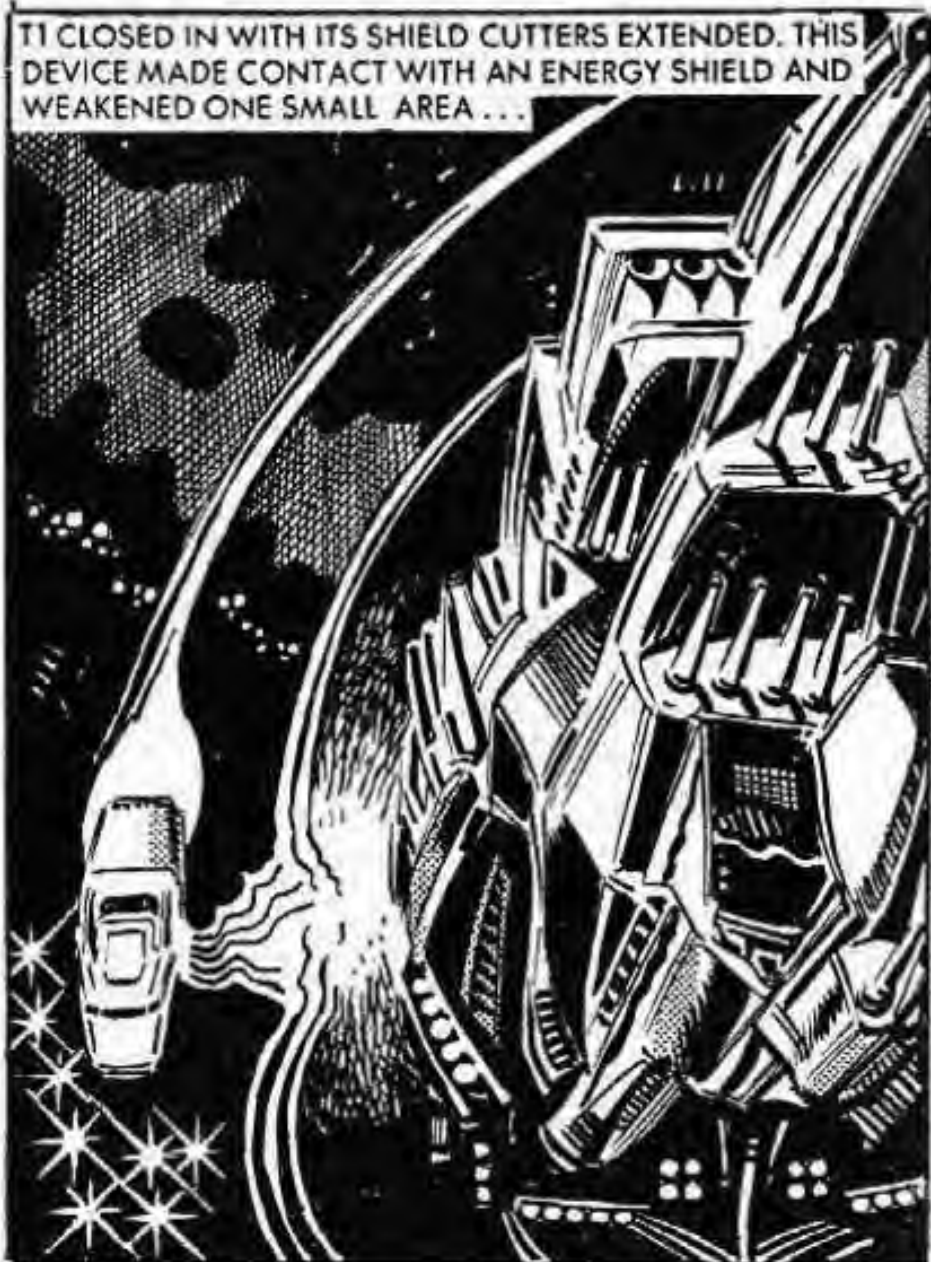
... SO IF T1 CAN RIP A HOLE IN ITS SHIELD AND LET THE FIGHTER IN, WE'VE GOT A CHANCE.

T1 WAS TAKEN TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE TEMPORAL WARP —

PREPARE SHIELD CUTTERS!



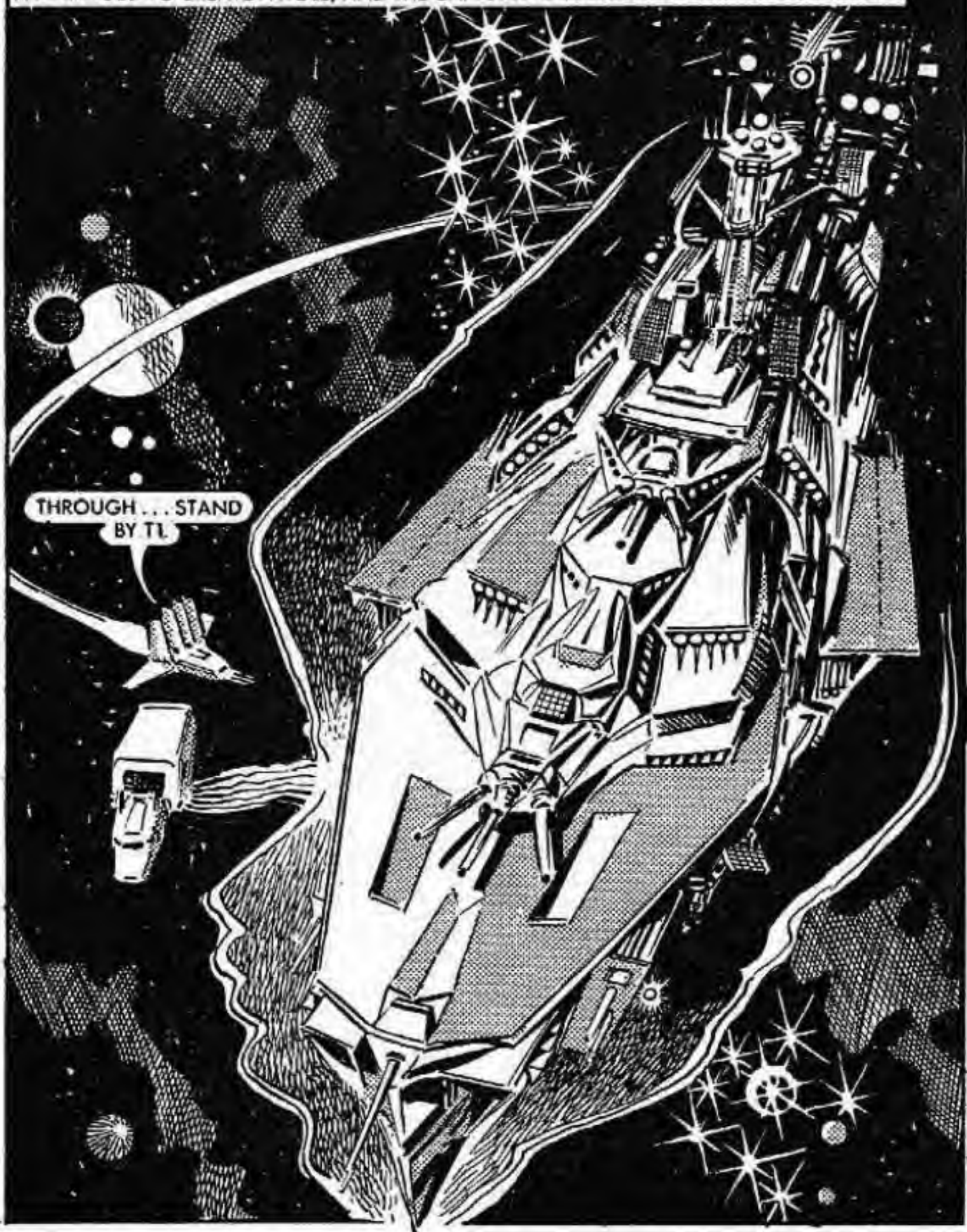
T1 CLOSED IN WITH ITS SHIELD CUTTERS EXTENDED. THIS
DEVICE MADE CONTACT WITH AN ENERGY SHIELD AND
WEAKENED ONE SMALL AREA . . .



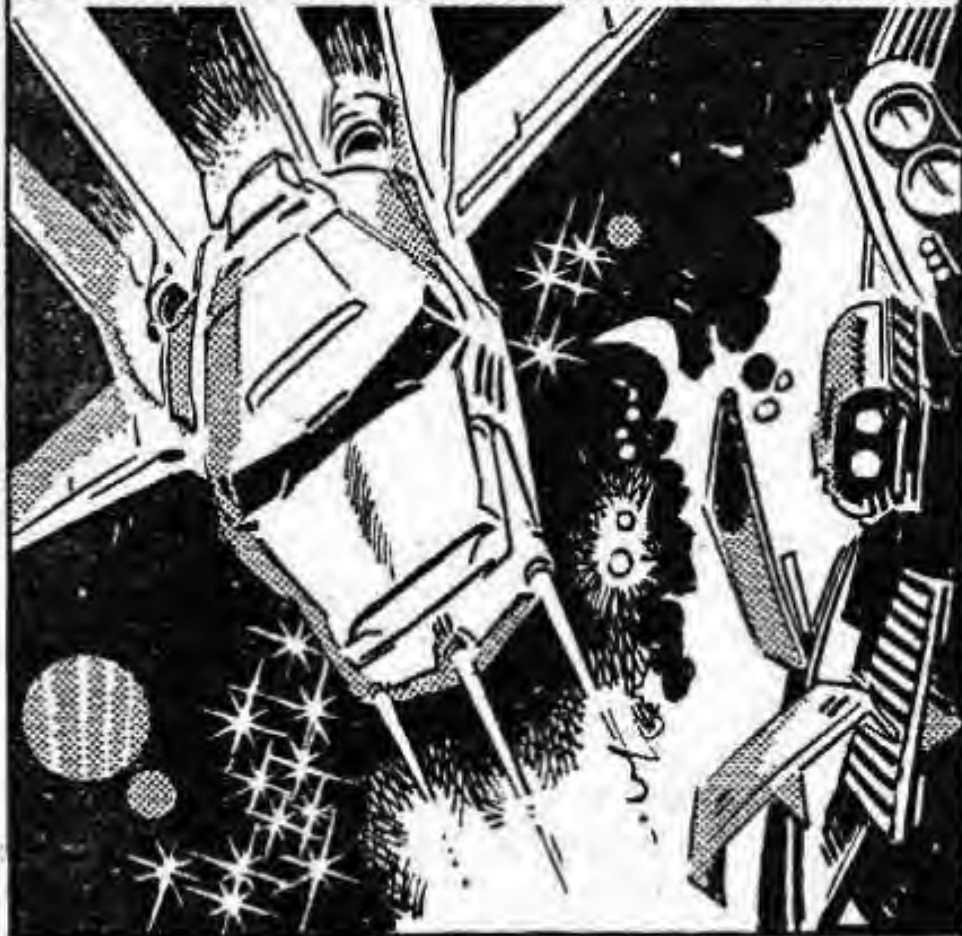
. . . ALLOWING A TEMPORARY GAP TO BE CREATED.



T1 MANAGED TO CREATE A HOLE, AND THE CAPTURED GORGOI FIGHTER ENTERED THE GAP.

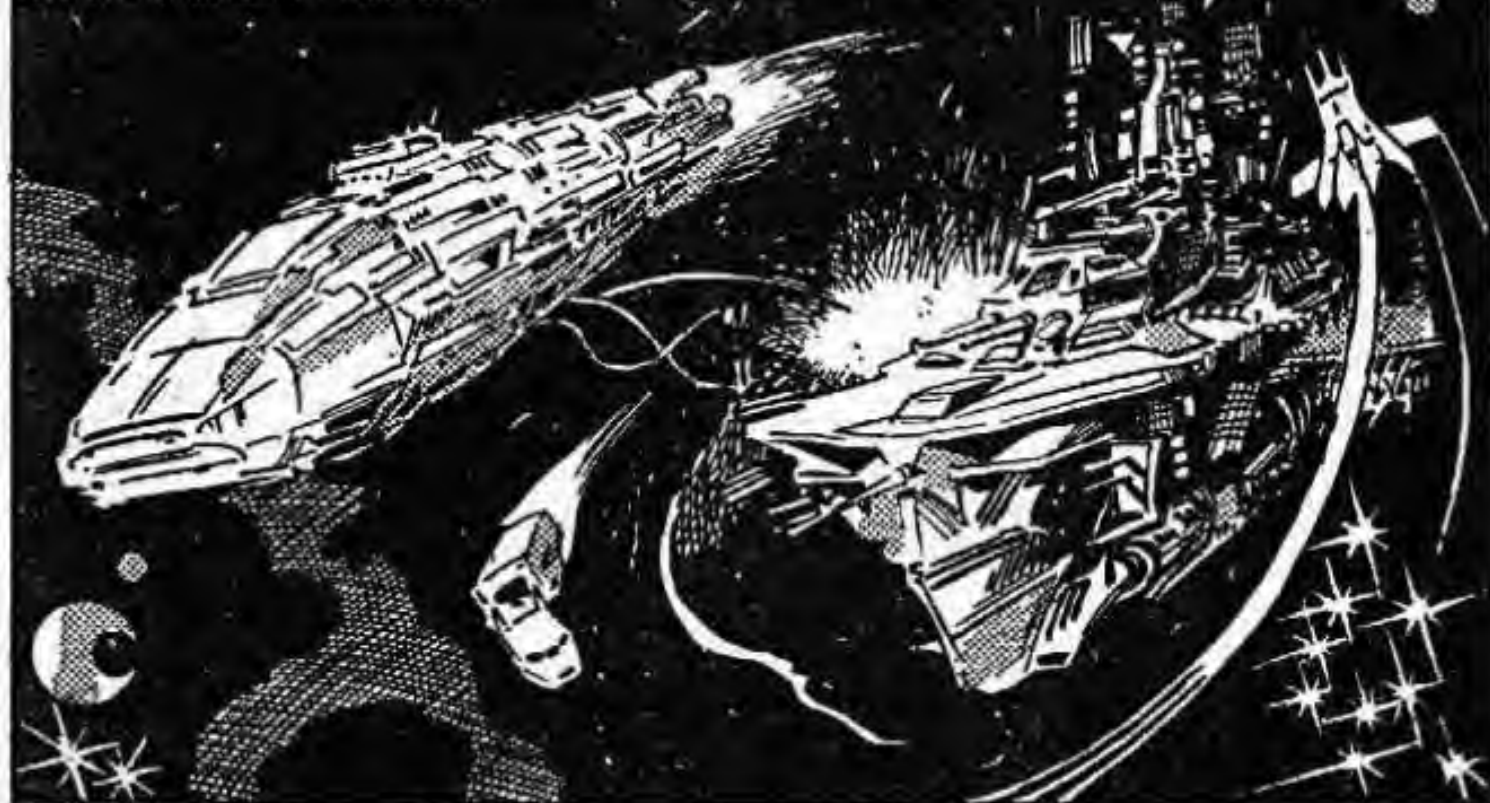


THE CAPTURED GORGOI FIGHTER, TOO CLOSE TO BE HIT BY CANNON-FIRE BEGAN TO DESTROY THE SHIELD GENERATORS.

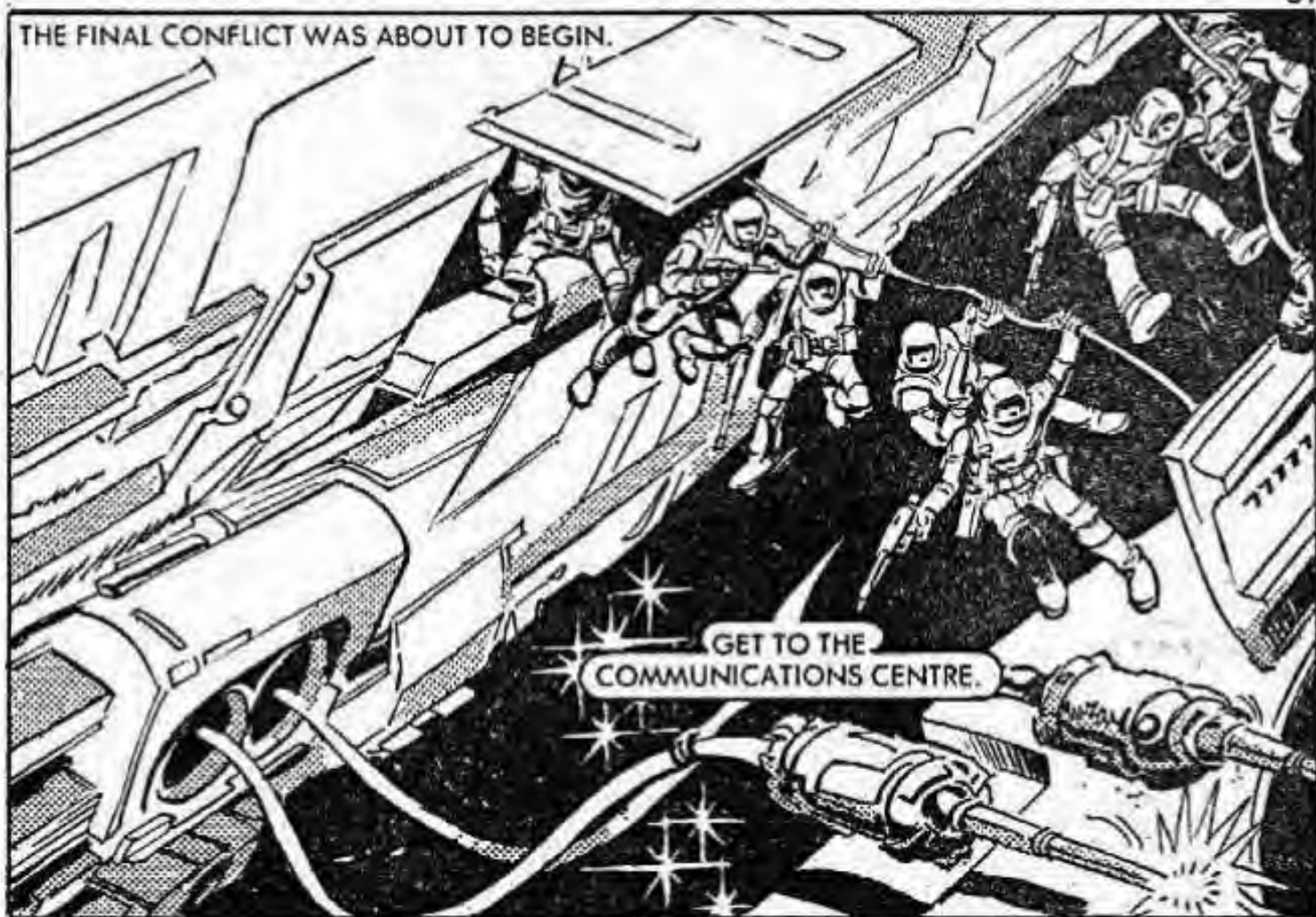


SHIELD IS GOING! STAND BY TO COME ALONGSIDE.

TO OVERCOME THE GORGOI'S SUPERIOR FIREPOWER, SANTANA CAME IN CLOSE AND DOCKING LINES SNAKED OUT.




THE FINAL CONFLICT WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN.



TI CAME ALONGSIDE —





RIGHT — YOU'VE ALL GOT SONIC BOOTS ON
— WHEN I GIVE THE WORD, ACTIVATE THEM,
AND MOVE.

SONIC BOOTS HAD IMPLANTS, WHICH, ONCE ACTIVATED,
BROKE DOWN DENSE MATERIALS BY VIBRATING THEM TO PIECES.

THEY KICKED THEIR WAY
THROUGH BULKHEADS —



THE GORGOI WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE —



THE SPECTACULAR ENTRANCE ALL BUT DEALT WITH THE GORGOI IN THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE.

WELL, THAT'S THAT! CONTACT EARTH
FOR HELP, WE'LL GO TO THE LOWER
DECKS TO JOIN UP WITH THE OTHERS.

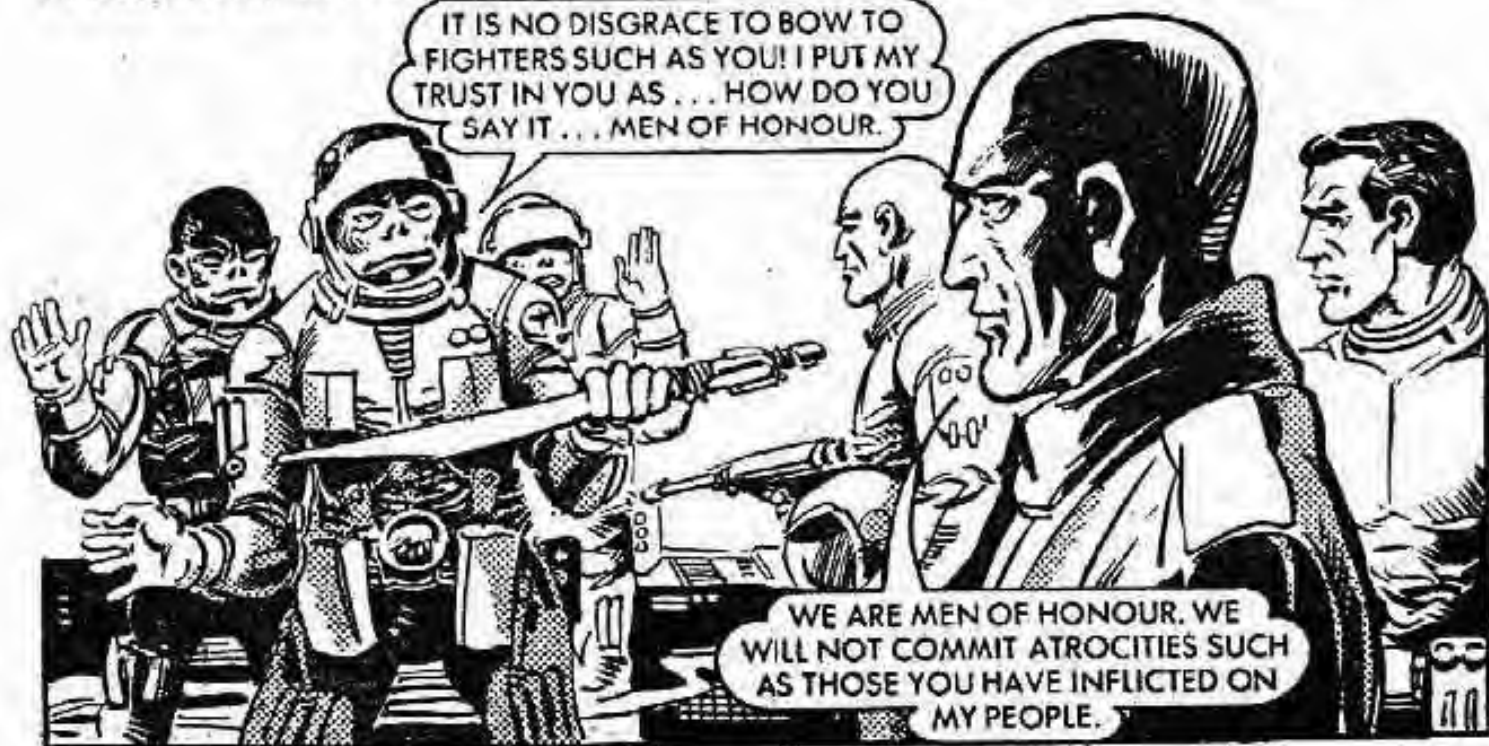


UNABLE TO USE THEIR FEARSOME WEAPONS, DESPERATE HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING RAGED.



FINALLY, REALISING THAT HE COULDN'T WIN, THE GORGOI COMMANDER SURRENDERED.

IT IS NO DISGRACE TO BOW TO
FIGHTERS SUCH AS YOU! I PUT MY
TRUST IN YOU AS ... HOW DO YOU
SAY IT ... MEN OF HONOUR.

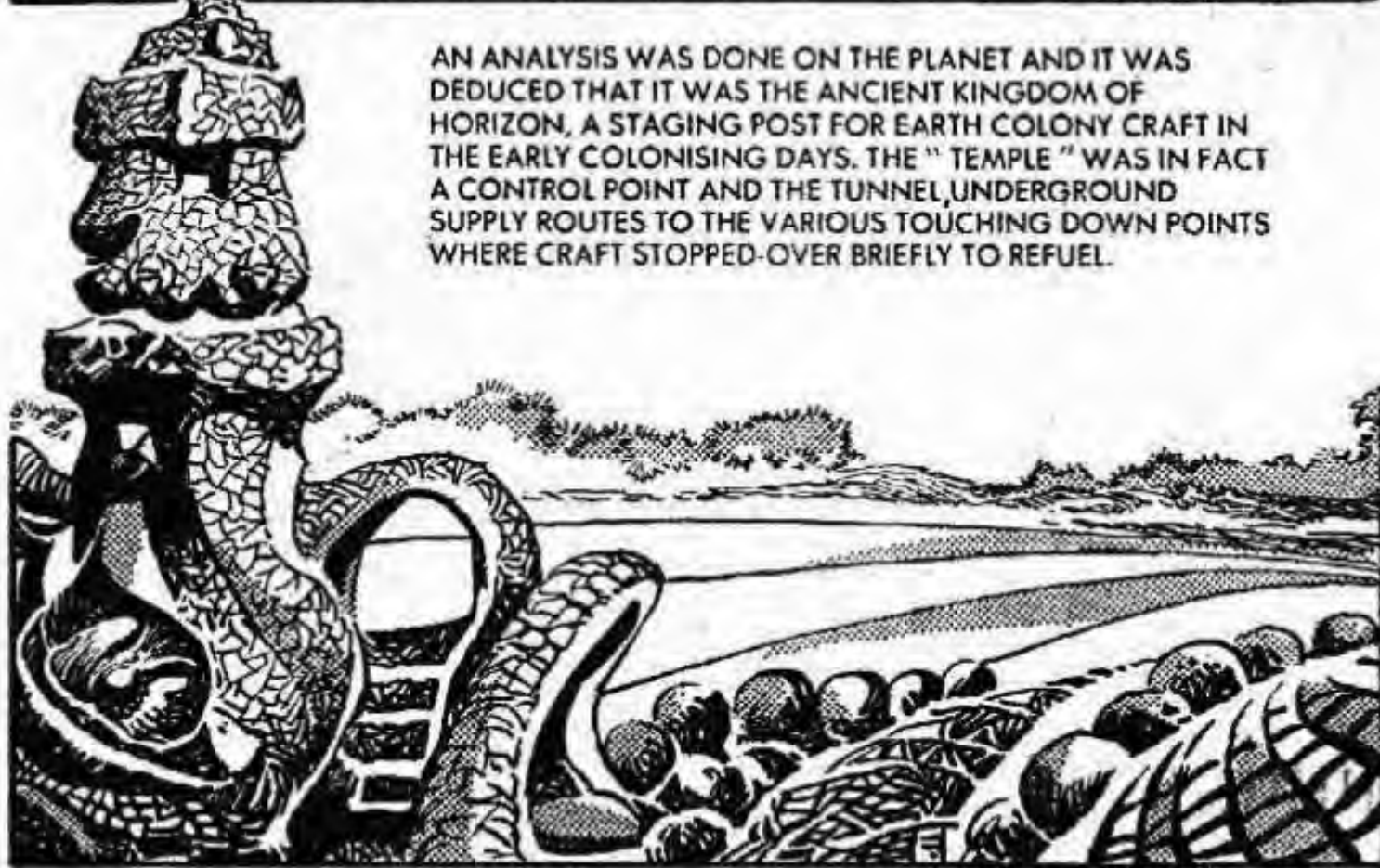


WE ARE MEN OF HONOUR. WE
WILL NOT COMMIT ATROCITIES SUCH
AS THOSE YOU HAVE INFLICTED ON
MY PEOPLE.

ONCE EARTH FLEET ARRIVED, A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT GAVE THE PLANET TO THE COLONISTS AS A NEW HOME. THE GORGOI WERE EXILED TO A CORNER OF THE GALAXY, AND THE CREW OF T1 GIVEN THE BATTLESHIP AS SALVAGE.



AN ANALYSIS WAS DONE ON THE PLANET AND IT WAS DEDUCED THAT IT WAS THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF HORIZON, A STAGING POST FOR EARTH COLONY CRAFT IN THE EARLY COLONISING DAYS. THE "TEMPLE" WAS IN FACT A CONTROL POINT AND THE TUNNEL, UNDERGROUND SUPPLY ROUTES TO THE VARIOUS TOUCHING DOWN POINTS WHERE CRAFT STOPPED OVER BRIEFLY TO REFUEL.





SO TWO BRANCHES OF THE SAME RACE, SEPARATED BY A MILLION LIGHT YEARS WERE RE-UNITED BY A BOND THAT SPANS FOREVER—BROTHERHOOD.

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The Soyuz 5 crew of Lieutenant Colonel Boris Valentinovich Volynov, Alexei Stanislovich Yeliseyev, and Lieutenant Colonel Yevgeny Vasilyevich Khrunov, were launched on January 15, 1969. The mission, to dock with Soyuz 4, lasted 3 days 0 hrs. 46 mins. Yeliseyev flew again in Soyuz 8 on October 13, 1969 for 4 days 22 hrs. 41 mins. and on Soyuz 10, launched April 23, 1971. This mission lasted 1 day 23 hrs. 45 mins. Volynov commanded Soyuz 21 on July 6, 1976 for 49 days 6 hrs. 24 mins. Khrunov and Volynov are still in cosmonaut programme while Yelesyev has become a leading man in the Soviet manned space programme.